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PAUL
CÉZANNE

AN
EXHIBITION
OF
WATERCOLOURS

THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

1946

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SINCE 1942 the Arts Council (or C.E.M.A. as it was then called) has worked in a most pleasant and harmonious partnership with the Tate Gallery. Very great pleasure has been given to many art lovers and to those who have found themselves studying and enjoying the art of the painter for the first time through the exhibitions made up from pictures and drawings hitherto only available to those living in or near London.

Two collections of the Tate's Wartime Acquisitions have been toured to fourteen different towns. In one city 33,000 visitors attended the exhibition in three weeks. In addition a delightful collection of British Drawings and a group of narrative paintings, mostly of the Victorian period, have been taken to other provincial centres. Individual loans have also been made to a number of the Council's exhibitions.

Now the Tate is reopening some of its own galleries and has graciously invited the Council to contribute one of the three collections which will mark the occasion. It is, perhaps, appropriate that the watercolours of Cézanne, who is known as the father of modern painting, should form the Arts Council's share of the exhibition now on view in this country's national collection of modern painting.

Thanks are due to the Tate Gallery itself, to the Louvre, Paris, the Museum Boymans, Rotterdam, and the Courtauld Institute, for loans from their permanent collections. Great generosity has been shown by all the private collectors who have once again lent their pictures. No one will regard it as invidious if we record special thanks to Mrs. Chester Beatty for her magnificent contribution and to Sir Kenneth Clark, who appears not only as a contributor, but as the author of the introduction to this catalogue. We are also most grateful to Monsieur Varin for arranging the loan of those watercolours which have come from France.

The catalogue contains references to Lionello Venturi's great bibliography of Cézanne, to the same author's smaller work on the watercolours which was published in 1943, and to the Phaidon Press volume of reproductions.

PHILIP JAMES

INTRODUCTION

ENGLAND is the only country in Western Europe where the watercolour medium has been used traditionally to produce finished pictures. Often the medium has been misused, but at least two developments of the tradition, the tinted drawing of Girtin and Cotman and the watery nebulous impressionism of late Turner and Wilson Steer, are complete minor art forms, like the sonnet and the rondo. In visiting this exhibition they must be forgotten. Cézanne's watercolours are studies preparatory to painting in oil, notes of strong sensations before nature afterwards to be rendered in the more permanent and solid-seeming medium. They are also solutions of those problems of picture-making which were his lifelong obsession, and which, at a certain period of his life, could be more easily settled in watercolour than in oil.

In about 1883 Cézanne's struggle to achieve the greatest possible modelling through colour had led to a density of texture which the passage of time has made most beautiful to us, but which Cézanne felt to be too congested. He wished to attain the same effect with far greater simplicity of means. He therefore limited his palette to green, blue and a few warm earth colours and adopted as an exercise in economy a spare and delicate technique of watercolour. What began as a discipline became a delight; and some of the paintings here exhibited were clearly executed for their own sakes. But they retain the evidence of their origin. No attempt is made at a full continuous description of appearances; the white paper predominates and the eye leaps from one complex of colour to another, forgetting that in between is nothing but whiteness.

Why is it that in spite of this lack of finish Cézanne's watercolours give such a satisfying sense of completeness? For one thing because he knew how to concentrate all his resources on the essentials of a composition. In the complexities and accidents of the scene he

could discover the points where a conjunction of planes set the eye travelling backwards and forwards in space; and he evolved a very simple method of representing these planes by a few transparent touches of warm and cool colour. These colours, like the instruments in a late Beethoven quartet, keep their identity while combining in the whole and reappear with their individual statements in different parts of the picture. But all these statements of depth are controlled by a single, superb design. This process is Cézanne's peculiar achievement and it is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in his watercolours. *He saw in depth and pattern at once.* And his watercolours show that the power to turn a leafy branch or a familiar apple into an abstract design, which would seem to be a highly intellectual process, became for him an immediate function of the eye. As a result his watercolours are far from the laborious machinery of Cubism, but have, rather, the delicate certainty of Chinese painting with a latent plasticity which it usually lacks.

In this, as in other ways, Cézanne's watercolours are a key to the understanding of his oils, and, in fact, greatly influenced his oil technique. They show, for example, his uneasy relation with the contour which, he is reputed to have said, escaped him, but which, in fact, gave him the dreaded sense of imprisonment. To follow the outline of a tree trunk in one of Cézanne's watercolours is to learn more about him than is contained in many volumes of criticism. Drawings always increase our intimacy with an artist, and sometimes intimacy leads to disillusion; but with Cézanne the more we grow familiar with the large, noble, characteristic movements of his hand, the more we become confident in his greatness.

For, in the end, it is not the technique of Cézanne's watercolours which makes them so admirable (a thousand imitators have demonstrated that), but the *sensation forte devant la nature* which Cézanne, like Constable, always insisted was the basis of his art, and from which each of these paintings takes its departure. And if in the pale-tinted notes of the '80s this

sensation is so severely disciplined as to be scarcely perceptible, in his later watercolours, such as the astonishing 'Still Life' from the Courtauld Collection, we are left in no doubt. The earlier influence of watercolour on oil is now reversed, and the medium is treated without ceremony, even with impropriety, such is the violence of the sensations which, at last, the old hermit felt himself strong enough to express.

K. C.

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1. TREES

7⅜ by 4⅜ inches. About 1880

Lent by Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.

2. PORTRAIT OF CAMILLE PISSARRO

8 by 5¼ inches. About 1877

Venturi 1235; Cézanne (Phaidon Press) 119

Lent by the Musée du Louvre, Paris

3. A GARDEN WALL

12 by 18 inches. 1872–1877

Venturi 837

Lent by the Courtauld Institute

4. LANDSCAPE

12½ by 19½ inches. 1879–1882

Venturi 843

Lent by Messrs. Matthiesen Ltd.

5. THE BACK OF A CHAIR

6¾ by 4¾ inches. 1879–1882

Venturi 850

Lent by Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.

6. STILL LIFE—APPLES

10¼ by 7⅜ inches. 1885–1890

Venturi 853

Lent by Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.

7. PEACHES AND PEARS

13¾ by 19¾ inches. 1879–1882

Venturi 861

Lent by Dr. A. Kauffmann

8. THE MEAL

5½ by 8 inches. 1879–1882

Venturi 893

Lent by Mr. H. J. Bomford

9. LANDSCAPE NEAR MELUN

14½ by 12¼ inches. 1880

Venturi 972; Venturi (1943) 3

Lent anonymously

Melun, near Paris, where Cézanne lived and painted in the year 1879. Around here he painted one of his rare snow scenes.

10. THE ROOFS OF L'ESTAQUE

12 by 18½ inches. 1883–1885
Venturi 916

Lent by the Museum Boymans, Rotterdam

L'Estaque, a suburb of Marseilles, where Cézanne frequently stayed and painted in the earlier part of his life. He was fascinated by the red roofs against the blue sea, the pines and the olives, Marseilles, and the mountains across the bay. There he took refuge from conscription during 1871, and from his family when he lived with Hortense Fiquet, whom he later married. Later on, L'Estaque became wholly urbanised and Cézanne's visits came to an end.

11. AVENUE OF CHESTNUTS AT THE JAS DE BOUFFAN

11¾ by 18½ inches. 1863–1887
Venturi 942; Cézanne (Phaidon Press) 98

Lent anonymously

Le Jas de Bouffan, a country estate just outside Aix bought by Cézanne's father as a summer residence. The name is Provençal for 'the house of the winds'. There was an attractive Louis XIV house with farm buildings, a charming old garden and a bathing pool. All of which supplied Cézanne with subjects. But the dominating motif was the magnificent avenue of chestnut trees which he never tired of studying. For forty years Jas de Bouffan was the background of Cézanne's life, and it was only on his mother's death that he sold the property.

12. THE RAVINE

13¼ by 20 inches. About 1885

Lent by Dr. Lothar Mohrenwitz

13. TREES IN 'X' SHAPE

12¼ by 18¼ inches. 1888–1897
Venturi 937

Lent by Mr. H. J. Bomford

14. STILL LIFE—FRUIT AND SAUCEPAN

10¼ by 17¾ inches. 1888–1895
Venturi 1540

Lent by the Musée du Louvre, Paris

This picture was given to the Louvre by Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill in 1936.

15. TREES IN 'V' SHAPE

16¾ by 11¾ inches. 1890–1898
Venturi 961; Venturi (1943) 6

Lent by the Leicester Galleries

16. THE FOOTPATH

12¾ by 19 inches. 1895–1900
Venturi 987

Lent by Mr. Oswald T. Falk

17. THE BEND IN THE ROAD

10¼ by 7⅜ inches. 1885–1895
Venturi 1008
Lent by Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.

18. VALLEY OF THE ARC

13¾ by 21 inches. 1888
Venturi 914; Venturi (1943)
Lent anonymously

19. MOUNT SAINTE VICTOIRE

14⅛ by 21¼ inches. 1900–1906
Venturi 1030; Venturi (1943) 22
Lent by the Tate Gallery

Mount Ste. Victoire, a rugged limestone mountain which dominates the Aix landscape. It became the all-absorbing *motif* of his later years, and he never tired of drawing it in every light and from every angle. In its rugged massiveness, and yet subtle contours, it becomes almost a symbol of Cézanne himself. As a boy he had wandered all over it. For a period he had rented a house at its foot. All his life it had fascinated him, and passing in a train in 1878 he exclaimed to a friend: 'What a beautiful *motif*!'

20. CHÂTEAU NOIR

14 by 20 inches. 1895–1900
Venturi 1034
Lent by the Museum Boymans, Rotterdam

Château Noir, a farm house which Cézanne rented for a period after he had sold the Jas de Bouffan, and whilst his new studio was being built. The characteristic rectangle of the building appears in many studies and paintings.

21. A HUNTING-BOX IN PROVENCE

12 by 18 inches. 1890–1894
Venturi 1052
Lent by the Museum Boymans, Rotterdam

22. WOODLAND

12½ by 19½ inches. 1900–1904
Venturi 1067
Lent by Mr. H. J. Bomford

23. GROUP OF TREES

12 by 19¼ inches. 1895–1900
Venturi 1068; Venturi (1943) 24
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

24. THE BEND IN THE ROAD

12 by 18½ inches. 1895–1904
Venturi 1071
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

25. MADAME CÉZANNE
19¾ by 14¾ inches. 1895–1900
Venturi 1093; Venturi (1943) 14
Lent by Messrs. Adams Brothers

26. A COAT ON A CHAIR
18 by 10¼ inches. 1890–1900
Venturi 1125
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

27. APPLES ON A DRESSER
19 by 24½ inches. 1900–1906
Venturi 1142
Lent by Mr. A. Zwemmer

28. STILL LIFE
12 by 18½ inches. 1900–1906
Venturi 1145
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

29. STUDY FOR A PINE TREE
12 by 18 inches. 1885–1890
Venturi 1494
Lent by the Earl of Sandwich

30. WOODLAND
17 by 12½ inches. 1895–1904
Venturi 1544
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

31. THE RIVER'S EDGE
13½ by 20¼ inches. 1890–1900
Venturi 1550
Lent by Mr. Oswald T. Falk

32. THE MILL ON THE RIVER
12½ by 19½ inches. 1900–1906
Venturi 1554; Cézanne (Phaidon Press) 109
Lent by Messrs. Adams Brothers

33. THE BEND IN THE ROAD
19 by 12¼ inches. 1900–1906
Venturi 1555
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

34. A SKULL

9 by 11¼ inches. 1895–1900
Venturi 1568; Venturi (1943) 16
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

35. LANDSCAPE

15⅜ by 21¼ inches. 1902–1906
Venturi 1612
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

36. AIX FROM LES LAUVES

12¼ by 18½ inches. 1904
Lent anonymously

Les Lauves, the studio which Cézanne built himself by a hilly road running out of Aix, and which dominates the town. Here he came and painted every day up to within a few days of his death. Away from all buildings and trees, the light of the studio was free from all the reflections that had irritated him in many of the rooms in which he had worked previously.

37. ROSES

12½ by 10 inches. 1890–1894
Venturi 1629; Venturi (1943) 15
Lent by Messrs. Adams Brothers

38. LANDSCAPE NEAR AIX

12 by 17½ inches
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

39. MOUNT SAINTE VICTOIRE

16½ by 21 inches. 1904–1906
Lent by Mrs. Chester Beatty

40. TREES BY WATER

12½ by 17½ inches. About 1895
Lent by Capt. E. Alport

41. APPLES AND A BOTTLE

12½ by 9 inches
Lent anonymously

42. MOUNT SAINTE VICTOIRE

11½ by 17½ inches
Lent anonymously

PAUL CÉZANNE

AN EXHIBITION OF WATERCOLOURS

ORGANIZED BY THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

Supplement to the Catalogue

52. TREES AND FOLIAGE
4¾ by 7⅞ inches. 1880–1890
Venturi 827
Lent by Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.

53. IN THE VALLEY OF THE OISE
12½ by 19 inches. 1879–1882
Venturi 835
Lent by Messrs. Paul Cassirer

54. TREES BY A ROAD
10¼ by 7⅜ inches. 1890–1900
Venturi 957
Lent by Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.

55. THE FLANKS OF THE SAINTE VICTOIRE
13¾ by 21 inches. 1900–1906
Venturi 1064
Lent by Messrs. Paul Cassirer

56. STILL LIFE
24 by 29 inches. 1904–1906
Venturi 1155
Lent by Mr. Samuel Courtauld

57. MOUNT SAINTE VICTOIRE
18 by 12 inches. 1900–1906
Lent by Messrs. Paul Cassirer

43. STILL LIFE WITH BLUE POT
17½ by 22 inches
Lent anonymously

44. MOUNT SAINTE VICTOIRE
19¼ by 23¼ inches
Lent anonymously

45. ROCKS AT BIBEMUS
17½ by 11¾ inches. 1895–1900
Venturi 1044
Lent anonymously

46. THE ABDUCTION
2½ by 4 inches. About 1867
Venturi 821
Lent by M. Etienne Bignou

47. PLANE TREE IN A SQUARE
11½ by 9¼ inches
Lent by the Musée du Louvre, Paris

48. STILL LIFE WITH INKPOT
16 by 15⅛ inches. 1906
Lent by M. Etienne Bignou

49. WOODLAND
11½ by 18¼ inches. 1880–1890
Lent by Messrs. Adams Brothers

50. A WOOD—AIX EN PROVENCE
18¼ by 11¾ inches
Lent by Mrs. S. Kaye

51. MOUNT SAINTE VICTOIRE
18 by 24½ inches
Lent by Mrs. S. Kaye

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